

Resources

2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

State of Massachusetts Department of Education

This survey is conducted every two years and includes questions about major risk behaviors for teens. You can also call your town's school department to determine if your school system conducted a local survey for the students in your community.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/hssss/yrbs/01/results.pdf>

American Social Health Association

The American Social Health Association hosts a website that provides information to teens and their parents.

www.iwannaknow.org

Centers for Disease Control Sexually Transmitted Diseases Facts & Information

http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/dstd/disease_info.htm

Your Local Police Department

STD Counseling and Testing Sites

Boston Medical Center
617-414-3824

Children's Hospital Boston (HIV testing only)
617-355-8127

Massachusetts General Hospital
617-726-2748

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National STD and AIDS Hotline
1-800-227-8922

This brochure was produced by the Norfolk Anti-Crime Council



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Everybody Is Talking to Your Child About Sex

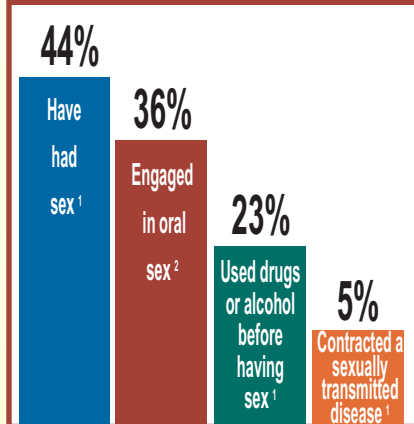


What Are They Hearing From You?

When parents don't talk to their children, kids find the answers from their friends and the media

American children are exposed to sexually explicit and implicit messages from TV, magazines, billboards, CD's, and the Internet hundreds of times a day. Even if you limit your child's media exposure, their attitudes about what is acceptable behavior are strongly influenced by peers. The effect on their behavior is profound.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



Sources: ¹Massachusetts Department of Education 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey; ²National Survey of Adolescent and Young Adults: Sexual Health Knowledge, Attitudes and Experiences, 2003. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

Teens Want to Talk to Parents

Teens will never admit it...but surveys consistently state that they really want your opinion and guidelines for behavior. When parents don't talk to their children about how to make intelligent sexual choices, kids find the answers from their friends and the media. And they end up making decisions based on information they learn from those sources.

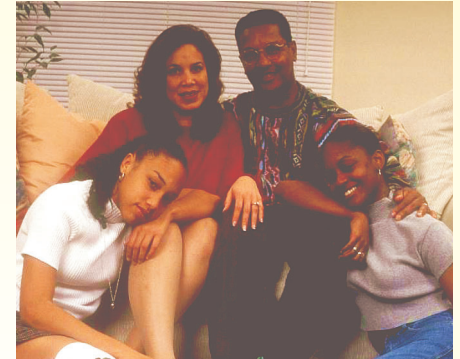
Just Get Started

Even if you don't get it all right, your information is 100% better than the media or your child's friends. Let your child know you are the best source of information about sex. Start the dialogue.

Start Talking About Sex — You are Your Child's Best Protection

by Dr. Sharon Maxwell, Clinical Psychologist

1. If you are waiting to begin talking to your children about sex, **chances are you've already missed your chance to be the first.**



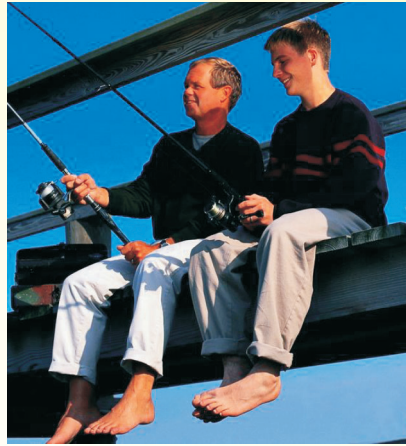
2. Everyone is talking to your kids about sex — TV, video games, magazines, song lyrics — **don't leave it up to the media to teach your children right from wrong.**
3. Sex cannot be summed up in a biology lesson. Teaching children about the power and responsibility that comes with being a sexual person is an **on-going dialogue.**
4. **Scaring kids** out of having sex buys you time but **does not help them** become sexually responsible adults.
5. Sexual desire is a powerful source of energy. Children need to know how to **control and direct their sexual energy in a responsible way.**
6. Teens want to hear your ideas about sex (even if they act like they don't). **Don't give up.**
7. Never assume that because children say they know something, they really do. It's an act. **Keep talking — and be concrete.**
8. If you don't know where to start, **turn on the TV.** Use the sexual situations you see on TV to start a conversation about sexual behavior.
9. **Listen respectfully.** Think before you respond. Be glad they are talking to you and **remember: the goal is to stay connected.**

Are You the Parent of a Boy?

Many teen boys say they receive the message that sex is “not a big deal”, and say it is embarrassing to admit they are a virgin. Some boys feel pressured to have sex with a girl to prove their “manhood” (and heterosexuality) to their peers.

It is crucial that parents talk to their sons as well as their daughters about the legal, medical and emotional consequences of risky sexual behaviors.

Remember: boys who become fathers have to pay child support, boys are usually the ones charged in statutory rape cases, and boys can get STDs just like girls.



People Who Have Not Learned to Control Their Sexual Desires Put Everyone at Risk

If your child has experienced sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence or rape, they are not alone. According to the 2001 MA Dept. of Education Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 16% of all high school girls in Massachusetts say they have experienced dating violence.

Teens who have been victimized are often too scared to get help. They think everyone

will blame them for “ratting out.” That can happen. But the truth is, if your child has been a victim of date rape or sexual assault, he or she will need help.

Don't let your child suffer alone. Make sure they know they can come to you. Then contact your local police department. The person who hurt them needs to be stopped.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Source: Centers for Disease Control



- ✓ Teens contract almost 4 million new cases of STDs each year.
- ✓ **Oral sex is not safe. Your child can acquire a sexually transmitted disease.**
- ✓ STDs are caused by bacteria or viruses. Bacterial diseases can be cured; viral diseases can be treated, but not cured.
- ✓ Aside from the HIV virus that causes AIDS, there are some 25 other STDs that your child can contract. For instance:
 - Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the leading cause of cervical cancer.
 - Chlamydia can lead to infertility. Most people have no symptoms until complications develop.
 - Herpes — and its symptoms of recurrent painful ulcers — can be treated, but the disease cannot be cured.

Massachusetts Law:

A Brief Overview*

Most people don't know what the law says about sexual behavior, particularly teen sexual behavior. Make sure your teen understands the legal consequences of his or her behavior.

Rape: Rape is defined as forcing a person to submit to non-consensual sexual intercourse. This includes any type of penetration, including vaginal penetration, oral penetration, anal penetration, digital penetration (use of hands or fingers), or penetration by an object, no matter how slight.



Statutory Rape: Under the law, individuals under age 16 cannot consent to sexual intercourse under any circumstances. "Verbal consent" has no bearing. In other words, **sex with a child (under 16) is always against the law.**

Alcohol or Drugs: A person who is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs may not be able to consent under the law.

Date Rape Drugs: Giving a person a drug with the intent to stupefy or overpower them to have sexual intercourse is against the law.



Sexual Touching: Unwanted touching of someone's private area, or holding someone down and taking steps to rape them, are all against the law. In addition,

sexual touching (breasts, buttocks, etc.) with a child under 14 is always against the law.

Harassment and Stalking: Harassing and stalking (including over the Internet) are against the law. It is against the law to e-mail someone repeatedly against their wishes and cause them emotional distress. It is also against the law to threaten to rape or physically hurt someone over the Internet.

**This section is not intended to be a complete list of all laws regarding sexual assault and rape.*